SKYWATCH

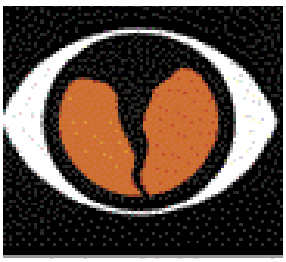
Spotter Newsletter

NOAA National Weather Service
Pendleton, OR

newsletter also available at:
www.wrh.noaa.gov/pdt/weatherSafety/spotterIndex.php

Fall 2004

Inside this issue:



Spotter Highlight: Joan Jacobsen K7JVJ (Deschutes 78H)

I am a "native" Oregonian. Born in Klamath Falls, moved to Portland at age 12, lived several years on the north Oregon coast, and retired some 15 years ago to the ponderosa pine foothills of the Cascades southwest of Sisters. I have always been fascinated with the variety of weather in the Northwest, and in Central Oregon you get the whole enchilada! We definitely have four distinct seasons. Our winters can be very cold, snowy and windy. Spring brings wet and cold and sometimes surprise snowstorms. Summers are hot and dry, punctuated with heavy thunderstorm activity, and the ever-present danger of wildfires. Fall is perhaps our quietest season, seductively lulling us into the long winter months ahead.

I learned about the Skywarn program after I obtained my amateur radio operators license (HAM radio) in 2002. The Skywarn program was reactivated in 2003 in our tri-county area. Because of my involvement with emergency communication activities as a HAM operator, I was asked to be the assistant Skywarn coordinator for Deschutes County. Mary Winter, a long time HAM operator and community activist, is our Deschutes County Skywarn coordinator. Mary has organized the Skywarn training programs, put together a great roster for the local HAM operators with their specific location reporting points, and spearheaded the Skywarn net. Since our spotters cover such a large area, specific reporting locations are essential for tracking severe weather occurrences. I am lucky to be working with Mary and a great group of "HAMs". Together we have had many opportunities to activate the Skywarn reporting system, as severe weather is a frequent visitor. Although I have talked about the Skywarn program from my point of view as a HAM, this in no way excludes other folks who are not amateur radio operators from being active local weather spotters. We promote the spotter training programs for anyone who is interested. These classes are essential to learn the NWS procedures of proper weather reporting.

Recently Alan Polan, our "go to guy" at the Pendleton NWS office, contacted our Deschutes county emergency coordinator and advised him of the services and information capabilities of the Skywarn program. In the event of a full-scale emergency, Skywarn spotters can provide valuable weather data and assist in potential communication links to emergency services. The Skywarn program plays an essential role as an advance warning system. I live in a heavily forested area and have been able to give my neighbors "heads up" information on impending serious local weather conditions. Thunderstorm activity, with vertical lightning strikes, have caused several wildfires in my immediate area this summer alone.

Last year I finally purchased one of my lifelong dream toys, a Peets Bros. Ultimiter 2100 weather station. The Pendleton NWS folks helped me set it up and install a software program in my computer. It has been a fun and valuable tool for providing me my own accurate weather data, and it patches my locations weather information into the NWS as well as many others. Several months ago I received a call from a man in Colorado who was visiting his daughter in Sisters. He wanted to thank me for my local Sisters weather information that helped him plan his trip out west.

So that's my Skywarn story. I have enjoyed telling it. Happy weather watching and reporting!! Joan

Weather Service Office Opens Its Doors...

By Meteorologist in Charge, Mike Vescio

The National Weather Service Forecast Office in Pendleton held an Open House on June 12th, 2004. Over 200 people attended the festivities including many of our area spotters. This event was an opportunity for the Pendleton staff to showcase the many forecast and warning services that we provide to the... **"Open House"** Continued on page 2...

"Open House" Continued from front page...

citizens of central and northeast Oregon and southeast Washington. The National Weather Service continues to introduce new cutting-edge technology into the preparation of forecasts that you rely upon every day. The newest forecast tool is the Graphical Forecast Editor (GFE). Forecasters use GFE to make graphical forecasts of temperature, humidity, sky cover, wind, weather, probability of precipitation, and precipitation amount out to 7 days. These graphics are available on our website at:

http://newweb.wrh.noaa.gov/forecasts/graphical/sectors/pdt.php

The graphics are converted to a text forecast automatically…no more typing the words!The GFE demonstrations were a big hit at the Open House. Also, very popular were the map briefings conducted every half hour during the course of the event with the aid of our 42 inch plasma screen TV. The briefings provided a detailed explanation of the meteorological reasoning that led to the 7-day forecast. Of course our other services were demonstrated as well including our spotter, amateur radio, fire weather, aviation, hydrology, climate, and cooperative observer programs. An awards ceremony was held for a couple of our long-standing cooperative observers; one with 60 years of continuous service and another with 40 years. Everyone who visited us had a great time and thought the tour of the office was very informative. If you could not attend the Open House, we will likely have another one sometime in 2006. In the interim, feel free to stop by during business hours Monday through Friday 8 am until 4:30 pm.

Crowds of interested visitors attend the open house

Spotter Fall Training Dates:

Deschutes County: Oct. 27th 6 pm

Lapine Library
16425 1st Street
Lapine, OR

Fall/Winter Weather Reporting Criteria:

Flooding	Any kind, duration, amount, location
Snowfall	Rates of 1" or more per hour. More than 2" in lower elevations, or more than 4" in higher elevations and storm totals.
Dust/Fog Blowing Snow	When visibilities are reduced below 3 miles, especially when reduced below 1 mile, and when it impacts travel.
Wind	Sustained winds of 30 to 40 mph or greater or gusts between 40 to 50 mph or greater.
Ice	Anytime ice (freezing rain) begins to accumulate. Be sure to measure it and let us know!

If you spot any of these phenomena, or a combination, please give us a call on the spotter hotline, or via email from our homepage www.wrh.noaa.gov/pdt. Phone calls are preferable in an emergency situation. If you've lost the spotter hotline number please call at: 1-541-276-4493. Thanks!!

Remember the Terms

Outlook Winter storm conditions are possible in the next 2-5 days.

Watch Winter storm conditions are possible within the next 36-48 hours.

Warning Life threatening severe winter conditions have begun or will begin within 24 hours. Act now!

Advisory Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. If you are cautious, these situations should not be life threatening.

www.wrh.noaa.gov/pdt/weatherSafety/spotterIndex.php

Precipitation So Far This Year

By Marilyn Lohman

The start of the year was wet and cold with the snow pack /water supply looking very good. March turned out to be unusually warm and dry and much of the snow pack melting about 2 months early. The end of May and much of June were very wet, while July was more normal (meaning dry and hot). A number of more fall type systems moved through in August with another wet month, while September was slightly drier than normal.

Station	Jan – Aug Precipitation (Inches)	Percent of Normal	Station	Jan - Aug Precipitation (Inches)	Percent of Normal
Bend	6.67	90%	Union Exp Stn	11.15	77%
Boardman	4.69	90%	Wikiup Dam	11.83	54%
Condon	10.36	112%	Connell 12 SE	6.21	103%
Heppner	9.41	101%	Dayton	11.10	93%
John Day	11.63	128%	Ellensburg	6.33	117%
Joseph	14.45	124%	Goldendale	10.85	113%
Madras 2N	9.32	119%	Kennewick	4.44	93%
Mitchell 2NE	10.07	130%	Sunnyside	6.90	170%
Monument	11.84	124%	Whitman Mission	11.38	129%
Moro	7.84	114%	Yakima #2	5.99	122%
Pendleton Exp Stn	13.63	124%			
The Dalles	8.03	97%			

Outlook For Winter 2004/2005

By Jon Mittelstadt

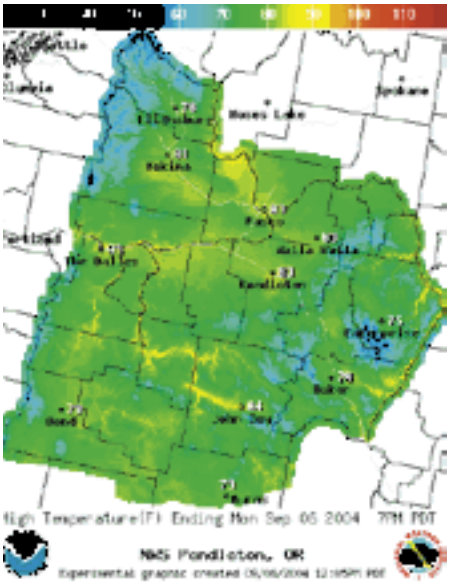
The NOAA/NWS Climate Prediction Center (CPC) and the Oregon and Washington State climatologists have all issued outlooks for eastern Oregon and eastern Washington calling for above normal temperatures and in general for near normal precipitation this winter. The single biggest factor in making climate forecasts is the El Nino / La Nina cycle, which involves changes in the ocean and atmosphere in the equatorial region of the Pacific Ocean. However, we are currently in the beginning stages of a weak El Nino, and weak El Ninos do not have much of an impact on the Pacific Northwest. Therefore, climatologists must look for other factors for their outlooks. One such factor is a winter average using the last 10 years. Since the last 10 years have been warmer than normal, there is a good chance these warm winters will continue. Another climate signal that is similar to El Nino, but depends more on conditions in the northern Pacific, is the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO). Current sea-surface temperatures in the central-northern Pacific are warmer than normal, a condition that is consistent with the "negative" phase of the PDO. Research at the University of Washington has shown that during "negative PDOs", there has typically been above normal snow pack in the Pacific Northwest. However, this tendency for above normal snow pack might be offset this winter by a warmer than normal winter. One thing to always keep in mind is climate outlooks are concerned with the average weather over a season and not the weather that may occur from day to day. A winter might by dry and warm on average, but be punctuated by several severe winter storms. As such, the National Weather Service reminds you to monitor NWS forecasts and warnings and stay aware of all winter weather hazards.

This Webpage Has it All!

The National Weather Service Forecast Office in Pendleton is your complete source of weather information from the Cascade mountains in central Oregon and Washington to the Idaho border. Our improved and updated webpage, www.wrh.noaa.gov/pdt, has links to everything you will ever want to know about local weather and climate. On the main page a graphic displays current watches, warnings and advisories plotted on a map of the region. With one simple click on this image in your area of interest the complete forecast for the next 7 days will appear before you along with links to warnings. The left side of the main page contains links to numerous pages devoted to things like aviation weather, climate, and spotter information. Digital and graphical forecast images are also available for selection under the "Prototype Fcsts" section. These new forecast images are the future of forecasts produced by the National Weather Service. Through this technology you are able to zoom in on your hometown and get a forecast for your backyard with a few clicks of the mouse. Currently, along with NOAA Weather Radio and the Emergency Broadcast System, the internet is the main source of weather information from the NWS. We encourage you to log on and check out all the weather information available for you, your family, and your friends. For questions and comments about the webpage feel free to send an email to Michael.cantin@noaa.gov or phone the office anytime.

Entering the Graphical Age

Graphical products are taking the main stage with the National Weather Service. A new and innovative way to view your forecast is available on our website at www.wrh.noaa.gov/pdt. When the main page comes up, click on the word "graphical" under the Prototype Forecast section on the left. A graphic of central Washington and Oregon will appear on the right, with numerous pull down menus to its left. From here you can choose what you want to see such as sky cover, winds, and chance of precipitation. As you select different fields and different times the map will automatically change to a display of your selected field. Graphics are available for all current forecast times through 7 days. New graphics including the graphical hazardous weather outlook, chance of freezing temperatures and probability of 2, 4 and 6 inch snowfall, are available. Stay tuned for even more graphical forecasts to come over the next few months.



Where Were You When...????

Do you remember that huge snowstorm when you were a kid? Or maybe that day when you thought it was so hot that you would melt? Perhaps you remember the feelings and memories but not the day, or how much snow fell…

Here at the Pendleton Forecast Office we keep all that weather data so you don't have to! A refurbished climate program resides here to help you remember…

This program captures daily weather information for many locations around Washington and Oregon. This information is then cataloged, stored, and readied for display. To access this database simply follow these directions:

-Go to our webpage – www.wrh.noaa.gov/pdt
-Click on the "Interactive Climate Tool" (Left side of screen)
-Select your county of interest
-Click on yellow highlighted city/town of choice
-Select either observed, normals, or records data
-Select month and year
-Click submit

…and presto daily data for your month/location of choice has arrived!!

Weather in American History Quiz
By Mary Smith

It's Election Year 2004. No matter who wins this election, one thing is for sure. Somehow, weather will have a major impact on the President's career. Every President since George Washington, even our Founding Fathers, understood the importance of meteorology. The following questions are only a sample of events in American History related to weather. These events have helped shaped the National Weather Service that serves you today.

1. What famous American statesman and philosopher was the first to record the movement of a storm system as a whole by deducing the northeast movement of a hurricane based on eclipse observations at Philadelphia and Boston in 1743?
    a. **Dr. Jack Knowitall**
    b. **James Madison**
    c. **Benjamin Franklin**

2. The weather in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was 76 degrees with cloudy skies at 2 PM on Independence Day, 1776. Who recorded this observation?
    a. **Thomas Jefferson**
    b. **Benjamin Franklin**
    c. **John Hancock**

3. On February 2, 1870, Congressman Halbert E. Paine introduces a Joint Resolution requiring the Secretary of War to establish what?
    a. **An amendment to the Constitution that every citizen be required to wear long johns if the temperature fell below 10 degrees Farenheit. Ulysses S. Grant had the Congressman disrobed wearing only his long johns and threw him out of the Capitol Building.**
    b. **A telegraph service to alert government officials of an impending storm, including tornadoes and hurricanes. Ulysses S. Grant refused to sign this resolution.**
    c. **A national meteorological service. Ulysses S. Grant signed the Resolution on February 9.**

4. Near blizzard conditions occurred on this President's Inauguration Day. Ten inches of snow covered the Nation's Capitol with snow drifts several feet high. Over 20, 000 brave marchers attended the parade. Who was this president? (hint: The parade occurred on March 4, 1909).
    a. **William H. Taft**
    b. **Theodore Roosevelt**
    c. **Franklin D. Roosevelt**

5. On June 30, 1940, the Weather Bureau is transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of _____ _.
    a. **Interior**
    b. **Commerce**
    c. **Defense**

6. On April 1, 1960, the first fully equipped meteorological satellite, is successfully launched. What was the name of the satellite?
    a. **TOTO I**
    b. **TIROS I**
    c. **I C U**

7. On October 3, 1970, Richard Nixon established what Presidential decree?
    a. **That every citizen be required to wear long johns if the temperature fell below 10 degrees Farenheit.**
    b. **A national "Be Nice to a Weather Forecaster" Day on November 5**
    c. **The creation of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Weather Service (NWS)**

Mail or email your answers in for a chance to win cool NWS stuff!! Winner drawn Dec. 1st. Answers will be posted on the internet.

Email: michael.cantin@noaa.gov
Mail: Mike Cantin
c/o Spotter Quiz
2001 NW 56th Drive
Pendleton, OR 97801

SKYWATCH

Your Regional Spotter News

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www.wrh.noaa.gov/pdt

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Pendleton, OR 97801